

1997-98 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Joint Committee on
Finance (JC-Fi)

Sample:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01a
- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01b
- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤ **

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

➤ **

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ 97hrJC-Fi_Misc_pt216

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

North Country Independent Living
P.O. Box 1245
Superior, WI 54880

Senator Brian Burke
Joint Committee on Finance
Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-788

Dear Senator Burke, I am concerned about the budget proposal by Governor Thompson and its affect on people with disabilities. The following are my personal thoughts and concerns.

I'm a student with disabilities if they cut the
programs many people with disabilities will not
know what to do after High School and they need
help to get employment, and living on there own

Thanks. Melanie Olivo

North Country Independent Living
P.O. Box 1245
Superior, WI 54880

Senator Brian Burke
Joint Committee on Finance
Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-788

Dear Senator Burke, I am concerned about the budget proposal by Governor Thompson and its affect on people with disabilities. The following are my personal thoughts and concerns.

I am a student at ashland high school
and I'm concerned about the people with disabilities
and that they give money to old people
and that the people with disabilities
think that it would help people with
disabilities out in the real world when
they are on there own.

Thanks. Amanda Neff

North Country Independent Living
P.O. Box 1245
Superior, WI 54880

Senator Brian Burke
Joint Committee on Finance
Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-788

Dear Senator Burke, I am concerned about the budget proposal by Governor Thompson and its affect on people with disabilities. The following are my personal thoughts and concerns.

I'm Bill Malouf, I go to Ashland High School. I am in a special Ed. Program so I can learn to read and write. Without this extra help I could not do this. Some day I want to get a job and have my own house and car.

Thanks. Bill Malouf



University of Wisconsin
SUPERIOR

UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE
Rothwell Student Center, 1800 Grand Avenue
(715) 394-8432 • FAX (715) 394-8454

Superior, WI 54880-2898

Testimony of
Jill Wiesneski

University of Wisconsin-Superior Student Senate

On the 1997-99 Biennial Budget Proposal

Before the Joint Finance Committee

April 17, 1997

Members of the Joint Finance Committee, good afternoon. My name is Jill Wiesneski and I would like to say thank you for allowing us to testify before you today. I am a professional Studies Senator at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

In the last biennium, state financial aid programs received no increases whatsoever. The current budget proposal calls for an increase in Wisconsin Higher Education Grant (WHEG), but unfortunately that was the only financial aid program to receive to receive an increase. It is proposed that the WHEG receive a 2% increase in the first year and a 3% increase in the second year. The Advanced Opportunity Program and the Lawton Undergraduate Minority Retention Program did not receive any increases.

UW Students support increases in financial aid at the same rate as tuition increases.

Because there were no increases in financial aid in the last biennium, financial aid programs are already behind when compared to rising inflation and tuition rates.

I was talking to a fellow student just yesterday, and he was telling me about his difficulties financing his education. You see, both of his parents are retired; he is a full-time student and works on-campus and subsequently does not make enough money to cover his educational costs. The only financial aid that he receives is in the form of loans, and these loans do not cover the cost of tuition for him. He is frustrated when he sees tuition rise because he knows that sooner or later he is going to be unable to afford to continue on in school.

These are the unfortunate facts that our students face today. They watch helplessly as rising tuition costs continually make paying for their education more and more of a challenge. In fact, rising tuition costs are pricing many students in Wisconsin out of an education. If this continues with no increase in financial aid programs, many students will be forced to drop out of school.

Financial aid must rise at the same rate as tuition in order to go keep our students in our universities. The alternative is that our students will not be able to afford education and will simply fall by the wayside. Please remember to invest in education. Thank you for your time today.

OTHER CONCERNS

- * Having a place where special needs individuals can go for daycare and day activities with IEP set-up. Needs and wants would be priority for structure of the program.
- * Easy access to outside activities such as the beach, zoo, and nature trails for people in wheelchairs.
- * Special sports activities and a place to go for activities would be helpful. This could be a community center. Volunteers could be there to help 2 or 3 hrs a day.
- * More accessible information about where to find special equipment, aids, personal need items, lifts, ramps, transport and respite care.
- * Transportation to church and other community outings including hospital/Dr. visits.

(from parents)

TESTIMONY

TO: JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE

**FROM: CATHOLIC CHARITIES BUREAU
1416 CUMMING AVENUE
SUPERIOR, WISCONSIN 54880
(715) 394-6617**

RE: COMMUNITY AIDS LEGISLATION

BY: TERRY HENDRICK, DIRECTOR, RESOURCE AND PLANNING

**DELIVERED THROUGH TELECONFERENCE AT ROTHWELL STUDENT
CENTER - UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-SUPERIOR**

DATE: APRIL 17, 1997

Thank you Chairman Burke and members of the committee for extending this opportunity to participate in these important discussions to the citizens of northern Wisconsin. We appreciate your efforts and the dedication of Senator Jauch to include our community as a forum for these hearings.

Catholic Charities Bureau of Superior provides health, housing, employment training, and human services to over 5000 persons in sixteen counties of northern Wisconsin. Our services are provided by 800 dedicated employees and over 1500 volunteers through agencies and programs located in twenty four communities ranging from Superior to River Falls, Siren to Rhinelander. Over 100 dedicated community leaders serve on the Boards of Directors of Catholic Charities Bureau and our affiliated agencies.

I would like to bring to your attention the concern of Catholic Charities Bureau that Community Aids be sustained at a level of funding which will allow human services agencies to continue to deliver essential services to vulnerable persons in northern Wisconsin.

As you know, Community Aids are the underpinning of social support for a broad range of human services programs, primarily operated by non profit agencies, serving persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, persons who are victims of sexual and domestic abuse, abused and neglected children, and persons seeking treatment for addictive disease. As you know, over the years these non profit agencies, operating through the supervision of local volunteer Boards of Directors, have developed a strong infrastructure of services in our communities.

These agencies have creatively managed to sustain their services despite decreasing financial support from the public sector.

We are informed that the proposed budget for 1997 -1999 continues a trend to decrease support of these essential community based services by the public sector. We are informed that the decreases will be in the amounts of \$7 million in the first year and \$8.6 million in the second year. We are informed that the proposed budget decreases in the Community Aids program reflect a cut in federal funding which will be passed along to counties and to the non profit health and human services agencies which contract with counties. Ultimately these reductions in funding become eliminations of essential services to the most vulnerable citizens of the state.

The proposed decreases in financial support come at a time when government is asking non profit agencies, their volunteer Boards of Directors, and their dedicated volunteers to provide a broader array of essential services to an expanding number of adults and children in need. Local human services agencies are being asked to take on a significant role in the implementation of the Wisconsin Works program. The elimination of basic nutrition and income support for refugees and legal immigrants as a result of federal and state policy initiatives has brought additional persons in crises to our agencies for assistance. Increases in Court ordered services emphasize the importance of these agencies to the life of the community but also reduce the capacity of non profit agencies to provide services to meet the critical needs of persons voluntarily seeking assistance.

Each month, the citizens of northern Wisconsin who give of their time and talent to serve on the Boards of Directors of non profit human service agencies are engaged in the extremely difficult task of not only providing essential programs for vulnerable citizens but of keeping the doors of their agency open. In northern Wisconsin, we are aware of a number of human services agencies, many of whom have served their communities for decades, which are in a monthly struggle to survive. These agencies, through the work of their Board members, volunteers and staff, have dedicated valuable time and resource to ongoing fund raising efforts not to promote the expansion of these agencies but to secure the necessary support to provide the basic services of their mission.

Community Aids are the lifeblood of programs for children and families in crises. Community Aids support programs which are delivered through cost effective service strategies, at the local level, under the direction of the most respected citizens in the community who voluntarily serve as members of a non profit corporation's Board of Directors. It is a system that is uniquely American and which is the envy of the world.

Supporting community based services and programs is a matter of good stewardship of scarce financial resources. In most instances it is the most effective and most "family friendly" strategy developed to assist vulnerable persons overcome barriers to economic and social self sufficiency. We ask that financial support for the Community Aids program be restored to previous levels and we respectfully ask that funding be sufficient to implement the increasing demands that the public sector is placing on the non profit and volunteer sectors.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony.

April 15, 1997

I am Lorraine Gouge, a member of the Lac Courte Tribe and mother of four children. I am presently employed at the Hayward Community Schools as a Home-School Coordinator. I work in the field of Indian Education and work closely with children and families. I feel honored to be representing the students of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) at this Public Hearing.

I would like to share with you my feelings about my educational experiences at LCOOCC. My education has enabled me to enter a professional field where I can help other Indian people to stay in school so that they too can continue on to college and make big changes in their lives and in the lives of their children.

I had my children at a young age and was not able to attend college right after high school. Therefore, I really appreciated the opportunity to further my education while I was raising my children. Going to LCOOCC opened doors in my mind and exposed me to ideas, people, and experiences that changed my life and helped me to believe in myself. I found that I had strengths and skills that I could develop that made me valuable in the work place so that I could better support my family.

As a single parent, I needed to balance family, work, and school. I wanted to develop my skills to a higher level but I knew that I couldn't attend a college that was a great distance from my home and family support system. At LCOOCC, every effort was made to help me stay in school and succeed. Whether it was a ride to school, tutoring, or help resolving personal problems the staff was always there encouraging us.

I have been watching the College grow over the years and have seen people grow too. Students not only get an education but also the self-esteem to find success in life and opportunities to take better care of their children and find good jobs. Students are trained not only to help our tribe but also to have the confidence to go out in mainstream society, as an Indian person, and compete for jobs and opportunities to make a difference in the world.

I am thankful to everyone at the College who nurtured me and mentored me so that I could grow into the job I have now. It has been difficult for me, as a single parent with four children, to get an associate degree. I would like to continue on someday to receive a bachelors degree, however at this time it is not possible to do so. In the meantime, I'm raising my children and am working in a field that is very rewarding for me. I feel that I am a role model for some of the children that I work with. I am proud to be an alumnus of LCOOCC and I want to see the college grow even more.

I have seen the college act as a bridge between the Indian and non-Indian communities and families in our area. I think this is a positive direction for the College to take because we are finally breaking down the barriers between cultures and making Northwestern Wisconsin a better place in which to raise our children. As students, we started working together for education and it helped us to develop acceptance, understanding, and respect that has carried over into our everyday lives.

I feel that Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College is a stepping stone to a better life for people. As a single parent, I was struggling, in minimum wage jobs just to make ends meet, without any of the nice things that I saw other people have. Now I have these nice things for my children too. My education at LCOOCC improved the living conditions of my family and other families on the reservation.

The staff that we have at the College is very professional and helps both the Indian and non-Indian students to be successful. I have seen a lot of students suffering from poverty, alcohol and drug problems, and low self-esteem when they first came to the college but I have seen some of these same people become competent and confident by the time they got their degree. I see the college helping people to stand strong in the working world and Indian people getting the opportunities, through their education, to show business people how well Indian people can do if we are hired. I know a lot of poor people who have learned to hold their heads up high and say, "I can do that, too...I can be successful." LCOOCC supports people's dreams and guides them toward setting and achieving their own goals. Poverty puts people under a lot of pressure and stress, but with education, people can make healthier choices and better decisions where their children are concerned.

Lastly, I would like to say that I have had the experience of sitting in the classroom with and working on projects with non-Indian people who I have now formed friendships with. Many of us are now working in the community and we network with each other and form partnerships to make our communities stronger. The College has helped to form these strong bridges between cultures and these bridges are being held together with the respect, trust and friendships that we built at LCOOCC.

COMMENTS TO JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE
By: Kenneth Stubbe, Executive Director
Superior-Douglas County Development Association, Inc.

I. Two issues I'd like to speak to are:

1. The importance of OC-3 level node Badgernet access to Superior and Douglas County economic development
2. Support for the Governor's Brownfields Initiative

II. OC-3 Level Node Badgernet access

- ▶ A four-lane OC-3 level node Badgernet data transmission expressway is as important to Superior and Douglas County educational excellence as the U.S. Highway 53 expressway is for transportation access to the rest of the country.
- ▶ A narrow, two-lane, rural DS-3 level node data highway will keep Superior in the technology hinterlands just as completely as the lack of the Highway 53 expressway would have kept us in the transportation hinterlands.
- ▶ The quality of technology and access to information at the University of Wisconsin-Superior and at our local schools and libraries are among the primary engines of local business growth, job creation efforts and local economic development.
- ▶ To even be in the game, Superior, Douglas County and northwestern Wisconsin must have the same access to information as communities we compete against.
- ▶ We should not be punished because of our geography.

III. Governor's Brownfields Initiative

- ▶ Superior, like other Wisconsin cities, is an international seaport.
- ▶ Superior and the southern shore of Lake Superior also retains much of its original pristine natural beauty.
- ▶ On the waterfront in Superior we have a number of abandoned, obsolete ore docks and grain storage facilities.

Comments to Joint Finance Committee

By: Kenneth Stubbe

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- ▶ Clean-up and redevelopment of these abandoned sites would restore lost natural beauty to Superior and would lessen the pressure to develop still pristine areas.
- ▶ Funding provided through the Brownfields Initiative would allow Superior to be both environmentally and developmentally pro-active on our waterfront.

April 17, 1997

March 27, 1997

Dear Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities,

We as parent/guardians of transition age young adults have concerns about what appears to be waiting lists and lack of facilities in our community. Due to waiting lists, minimal housing and limited day programming young adults lack opportunities to maintain needed life skills and experience stimulating environments. The life skills they have acquired have taken years to develop and regression occurs quickly and easily. They will lose that special spirit we worked so hard to get. Our young adults deserve the opportunity to continue to progress to their fullest ability. The waiting lists in our community reflect the need for adequate housing and day program activities. We need federal and state dollars to develop and maintain new facilities. We need the CIP 1-B daily rate increased and more CIP 1-B slots made available to individuals.

We appreciate your attention to this situation. We and our young adults want to thank you, in advance, for your help and assistance in creating a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Miss Regina Leckel
Thomas E. Johnson

North Country Independent Living
P.O. Box 1245
Superior, WI 54880

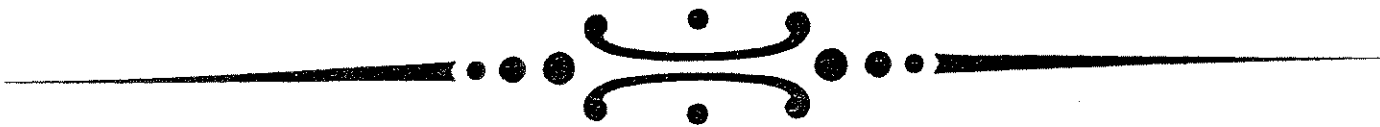
Senator Brian Burke
Joint Committee on Finance
Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Burke, I am concerned about the budget proposal by Governor Thompson and its affect on people with disabilities. The following are my personal thoughts and concerns.

I am the Program Director at Colonial Health Care ICF-MR in Superior, WI. I am an advocate for 18 individuals whose disabilities range from mild to Profound Mental Retardation, in combination with some physical disabilities. I am concerned about MA copayments. Our individuals receive \$40 a month and, in my opinion, should not be forced to make payments to MA + for specialized medical transportation. For some this is the only way they can be mobile w/in the community.

also I am concerned about the freeze on educational funding for children w/ exceptional needs. This population is growing and needs to be followed. People with disabilities should not be discriminated against if they are unable to live in the community. Please don't forget about them.

Thanks. Traci pryzak



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES & FAMILY MEMBERS
HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY ON
GOVERNOR THOMPSON'S PROPOSED BUDGET.
WISCONSIN'S JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE
WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU.

WHEN: THURSDAY, APRIL 17

WHERE: UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-SUPERIOR
ROTHWELL STUDENT CENTER, ROOM 218
CATLIN AVENUE, SUPERIOR.

TIME: 1:30 TO 4:30

**MANY CHANGES ARE PROPOSED THAT WILL IMPACT
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. TO FIND OUT MORE, CALL
NORTH COUNTRY INDEPENDENT LIVING AT 1-800-924-1220 OR
392-9118 OR NCIL ASHLAND OFFICE AT 682-5676 OR 1-800-499-5676**



TOURISM MAY BE HURT

Money problems threaten snow trails

Snowmobile clubs say some sites may close; more funding sought

By TOM HEINEN
of the Journal Sentinel staff

Many snowmobile clubs that maintain Wisconsin's 25,000 miles of trails might close trails or cut back on maintenance in the next few weeks because of inadequate state funding and frequent snowfalls, club officials say.

Those actions would affect more than the out-of-state tourists and the nearly 200,000 registered snowmobile owners in Wisconsin who flock to those trails on weekends.

Snowmobiling is the main winter attraction in tourist-dependent counties in the northern third of the state, and a disruption of it would ripple sharply through local economies, said Bill Pfaff, president of the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs.

The money shortfall is so bad the association plans to ask Gov. Tommy Thompson to set aside \$1.8 million in new funding for trails in his upcoming budget to prevent problems in future win-

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ters.

The difficulty in caring for trails is one of the growing pains of a sport in which nearly 40,000 additional snowmobiles have been registered in Wisconsin in the past six years.

"The whole general public is starting to pay attention to snowmobiling," Pfaff said. "It makes a very, very great financial impact on Wisconsin. We estimate that close to 100,000 sleds a year come in from other states."

The specter of trail closings and the quest for more money are partly the result of two consecutive seasons of extended winter weather and plentiful snowfalls.

Use of the trails has been heavy, especially in prime recreational areas, but rising fuel prices and the current level of state funding have caused many clubs to go deeper into debt as they struggle to keep up with the increased need for trail grooming, said James Saari, chairman of the Wisconsin Snowmobile Recreational Council.

DNR records show that during the 1995-'96 season, clubs spent \$900,000 that could not be reimbursed because state trail program funds were exhausted.

"There's no question that this winter's got people, particularly in the northern counties, on pins and needles because they took a big hit last year, and here they are facing another big winter," said Larry Freidig, the DNR's manager of motorized recreation grant programs.

In the Hurley area, for example, the White Thunder Riders snowmobile club has scheduled an emergency meeting for Wednesday with local business owners and the chamber of commerce to discuss options and to see if businesses can help with the club's financial crunch.

"We have to curtail our grooming because at the rate we're going, we won't make it through the middle of February," said Jim Piilola, club vice president. "We owe money to everybody these days. We bought a \$95,000 groomer and traded one in on it for \$40,000, so we owe \$55,000 on the groomer. And the price of fuel doubled."

As a longer-term solution, Pfaff's association and a state snowmobile council appointed by Thompson are asking for \$1.8 million in the next state budget.

The groups are calling this effort the "1% solution" — representing 1% of the estimated \$188 million in taxes and fees that they claim state and local governments derive from snowmobiling each year.

(OVER)



GARY PORTER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A snowmobiler crosses ice at Fish Creek in Door County. The state has 25,000 miles of trails and 200,000 registered snowmobile owners.

If they don't get that funding through Thompson's budget, they plan to seek it directly from the Legislature in a separate bill, said Saari, who has served on the state snowmobile council since 1977 and has been chairman for 11 years.

Snowmobiling is vital for northern communities, according to local and state officials.

"It's the biggest thing we have," said Ricky Alvey, director of the Hurley Area Chamber of Commerce in Iron County. "Just the Christmas holiday alone is a million dollars. It's huge. When we have our red light rally, the first ride of the season in early December, we have 3,000 to 5,000 snowmobilers."

What would happen if there were no snowmobiling?

"I would have no job," she said, "because most of our businesses in town are recreation oriented — taverns, motels, restaurants, gas stations."

Snowmobilers spend money in different ways than skiers, staying at many different motels and making pit stops throughout a county, Alvey added.

Dana Hammond, marketing director for the Minocqua-Arbor Vitae-Woodruff Area Chamber of Commerce, agreed.

"It's very, very important to us," said Hammond, whose chamber serves businesses in Vi-

las and Oneida counties. "I really think that snowmobiling is one of the key things that keep our tourist industry going every winter. They spend \$120 to \$150 a day, with buying gas and groceries and eating out and shopping and motels."

The DNR's Freidig said he gets few complaints about snowmobile engine noise or about drunken snowmobilers, though he assumes that those issues sometimes arise at the town or county levels.

Club officials describe snowmobiling as primarily a family sport, saying that, as in any activity, a small percentage of participants sometimes causes problems.

Although snowmobiling has widespread economic benefit, responsibility for the trails rests largely on the shoulders of volunteers. In most cases, local snowmobile clubs arrange permission from farmers for trails to cross their land.

Unpaid club members clear brush and otherwise maintain the trails in warm weather. They use costly, club-purchased equipment to compact snow and smooth trails in the winter.

Clubs or associations of clubs in areas of heavy recreation generally have \$300,000 to \$500,000 worth of equipment, most of it for winter use, Freidig said.

The temperature and moisture content of the snow have a big effect on how well the snow can be compacted into a firm trail, Freidig said. With use, trails can develop bumps called moguls, waves and ripples that jolt and shake riders as the speed increases.

The state partially pays for trail maintenance and grooming through snowmobile registration fees and a gasoline tax transfer based on 50 gallons of gasoline per snowmobile. The money usually is channeled to county governments, which contract with clubs to establish and maintain the trails.

But the state helps pay for only 16,000 miles of the trails. Clubs maintain the remaining 9,000 miles on their own, holding fund-raisers and putting collection jars in taverns to support their efforts on all of the trails.

In 1995-'96, state registration fees totaled \$2.5 million and the gas tax transfer produced \$3 million. Some of the money was used for administrative and law enforcement costs related to snowmobiling.

The rest went to maintain and groom trails, but it wasn't enough. The pool of money for state-funded trails fell \$900,000 short of what clubs spent last season in 34 counties in about the northern half of the state, according to DNR records.

Along the 16,000 miles of covered trails, the state provides up to \$200 per mile, and clubs that exceed that amount can apply for additional money from a supplemental fund. However, most years there isn't enough money in that fund to meet the requests.

And the supplemental fund will have a shortfall of at least \$900,000 this winter, Saari said.

"I bet 50% of the clubs that get supplemental money in the state are close to their maximum debt," Saari said. "They have to run just like any other corporation because that's just what they are. They have to cut back."

SNOW MOTION

*Snowmobile sales
and the businesses they fuel
are blazing new trails.*

by Barbara Carton
The Wall Street Journal

It may be zero outside, but Bosacki's Boat House in Minocqua is jammed with snowmobilers ordering the \$11.95 prime rib and Roisting Polish Delights (hot chocolate and peppermint schnapps).

Says owner Larry Bosacki, gleefully, "It's nothing to have 100 snowmobiles in the parking lot."

Snowmobiling, nearly killed by high prices of machines and noise complaints a decade ago, is roaring back, and breathing new life into areas of the Northern U.S. that were formerly depressed — and depressing — in the wintertime.

U.S. snowmobile sales tripped to \$905.2 million last year from \$300 million in 1990, and analysts believe sales are likely to grow by up to 10 percent a year for the next few years. Including sales of accessories like special insulated suits and boots, snowmobiling fuels a \$4 billion-a-year market, according to the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, a trade group.

Partly responsible for the comeback: Today's sleek machines are quieter, more stable and more comfortable, with amenities like heated handlebars and floorboards. They zip along at up to 65 miles per hour and break down far less often, making it possible to take week-long trips over a vastly expanded network of trails. The Northern tier of the U.S. is

criss-crossed with so many trails that it's now possible to travel from Maine to Washington state via snowmobile. In some states, the miles of groomed trail — 15,000 in Minnesota — exceed the number of miles of state highway.

Snowmobiles are cutting their widest swath in the upper Midwest, where Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin together have more than 630,000 snowmobiles registered, or about half the national total. There, restaurants and hotels that once served mainly summertime bikers and fishers are open year-round. And new ones are springing up.

Summer fishing cabins are being winterized as snowmobile base camps, too.

When Terry Roy, 57 years old, moved to Big Sandy Lake in central Minnesota several years ago, few homes were winterized. Now, he says, almost all are. And every Friday night, traffic streams in from Minneapolis

Please see SNOWMOBILES,
Page 2F

Snowmobiles

Continued from Page 1F

and Duluth.

Snowmobile tourists have brought undeniable economic benefits to these Northern states, where there once wasn't much to do during winter but snowshoe and ice-fish. The average cross-country skier spends \$45 to \$55 a day, while snowmobilers spend three times that, one study by several Minnesota towns found.

Snowmobilers travel in bigger groups than skiers and tend to stay one to three days longer, creating a midweek hotel business.

In Minnesota, home of two big snowmobile manufacturers — Arctic Cat and Polaris Industries — the sport has an annual economic impact of \$304 million in direct and indirect spending, state officials say. That includes \$16 million in tourist spending by non-Minnesotans, and \$280 million in sales of snowmobiles made in the state.

The nearly 6,000 people who work at snowmobile makers bring home \$75 million in wages. The sport has also attracted businesses like Floe International, which started making sled trailers in tiny McGregor, Minn., eight years ago and now employs 80.

Snowmobilers are heavily blue-collar, with interests that run toward Popular Mechanics and Motor Trend magazines, demographic studies show.

But they spend an average of \$5,400 per new snowmobile, plus \$1,000 on accessories like \$70 leather gloves, \$200 Darth Vader-like helmets or even \$199.95 gold pinkie rings embossed with "Arctic Cat," a snowmobile brand.

Some families also buy \$1,200 Kitty Cat snowmobiles for children ages four to nine, which go about eight miles per hour — and even enter kids in Kitty Cat races. Trailers for hauling the machines can cost \$5,000.

But cross-country skiers slipping through the woods in search of fresh air and wildlife are often dismayed to find snowmobilers thundering by in neon outfits (lime green is big this year).

Nature lovers also complain that snowmobiles tear up the earth, and snowmobilers who ride drunk have caused accidents, prompting new safety laws in some states. Illinois last year enacted a new law setting penalties for snowmobile accidents and for operating a snowmobile under the influence.

But for Roberta Kohtala, owner of Richards' Supper Club and Motel in Dunbar, Wis., there wouldn't be enough business to keep her 15-room establishment afloat if not for the snowmobilers.

In Minnesota, home of two big snowmobile manufacturers — Arctic Cat and Polaris Industries — the sport has an annual economic impact of \$304 million in direct and indirect spending, state officials say.

Snowmobile clubs start booking midwinter reservations in October, and often take the whole place. Farther west, in the Minocqua area, 476 hotel rooms have been added in the last three years, for a total of 1,552, and another 100 are under construction — all due to snowmobilers, says Al Hanley, the local Chamber of Commerce head.

The mounting popularity of snowmobiling prompted Jack Poynter, a dealer in Houghton, Mich., to sell fewer used Chevrolets and start selling and renting snowmobiles 11 years ago — a decision he doesn't regret. "Saturday mornings, the crowds are 25 deep at the counter," he says. "It's a madhouse."

Name: James Zastrow
Occupation: President of M&I Bank
City: Superior, WI 54880

My relationship to UW-Superior and the UW System is that I am an alumnus of UW-Superior and supporter of higher education

I would like to speak to you on the need for the members of the Joint Finance Committee to support the UW System in providing state funding for competitive compensation for the faculty and academic staff.

First we must recognize the UW System is facing a critical period in its ability to continue to provide quality education to its students. The UW System must be able to offer competitive salaries near the median of its peers to replace retiring individuals and recruit and retain the best faculty and academic staff. The UW System has offered ways to do this without sacrificing Wisconsin's historical commitment to keeping tuition affordable.

UW-Superior is known for its faculty commitment. In Superior, students rate their approval of faculty and staff at 98 percent consistently.

With nearly 25 percent of that faculty and academic staff expected to retire in the next five years, this community needs to recruit individuals who will be quality scholars and maintain that student satisfaction rate.

Without competitive pay, the best faculty may be recruited by competing institutions. That would unfairly impact the System and especially an institution in northern Wisconsin committed to serving more than 11,000 square miles of our state.

The success of our University plays a vital role in the community. Keeping it vital with qualified professionals is a must for the region's stability and economic growth.

The UW System faculty and academic staff have not kept pace with growth in the Wisconsin personal income, inflation or with peers.

In 1995-96, UW System faculty salaries were 3.37 percent behind their peers. Over the last ten years, the average growth in the UW System pay plan has been below the consumer price index and increases in personal income growth.

Other states are reinvesting in their public universities and stepping up competitive efforts to attract our Wisconsin students, faculty and academic staff. This year, Wisconsin is one of only six states nationally that did not increase support for higher education.

The recent pay plans of 1 percent and 2 percent are not competitive in the national higher education market.

The flexibilities in the budget are necessary to maintain the UW System's competitive edge.

What are the options?

The first option is for the state to take a really hard look at supporting the 4 percent compensation package totally through GPR.

That would maintain the state's commitment to higher education and not impact student tuition. In this region, especially, with the state's low family income and high numbers of first-generation students, full support for the 4 percent increase is preferable. While this is not one of the official proposals from the UW System or the Governor today, the state should look at finding resources for this in the GPR funding.

The second option is for the Joint Finance Committee to support the Regent's proposed split of the 4 percent faculty and academic staff compensation package between GPR funding and the use of the Regent's proposed budget flexibility.

This proposed 2 percent from GPR and 2 percent from tuition flexibility for the compensation package will not require using the full 105 percent flexibility.

Funding 2 percent of the 4 percent pay plan from tuition alone will cost about \$13.2 million in 1997-98 and \$14.1 million in 1998-99. This would require the Regents' use of about 103.3 percent and 103.2 percent respectively.

And, if additional items are funded from the flexibility resources, such as additional advising services and full Badger Net connections, the percentage of tuition flexibility may rise to about 103.8 percent and 103.7 percent respectively.

In conclusion, I am proud to be an alumnus of the UW System and UW-Superior.

The state needs to assure future students that they will get the same quality instruction I received from faculty and academic staff.

I urge the state to first consider supporting the compensation package totally from GPR and, if that is not possible, support the UW System in its use of tuition flexibilities.

As members of the Joint Finance Committee, I am asking you to carefully consider this important request.

